We claim:

1.   A method of invoking retrieval of software or data from a first source to a peripheral device capable of communicating with the first source, the method comprising:

detecting a device event generated by the peripheral device,

transmitting to the first source, in response to detection of a device event, a request to obtain the software or data from the first source, and

receiving the software or data from the first source, the software or data having been selected to be appropriate for the peripheral device in response to the event generated by the peripheral device,

wherein the steps of detecting, transmitting, and receiving are performed automatically when a device event is detected, without intervention by the user of the peripheral device.

2.   The method of claim 1 wherein

the peripheral device is in communication with a client system, and

the detecting, transmitting and receiving steps can be executed even when the client system contains no device driver to support the peripheral device.

3.   The method of claim 2 wherein the software or data from the first source includes a device driver appropriate for the peripheral device.

4.   The method of claim 2 wherein the request to obtain software or data includes a code identifying a device type of the peripheral device.

5.   The method of claim 2 wherein the first source is a local source on the client system.

6.   The method of claim 2 wherein

the first source is specified by an identifier designating an entry in a database on a remote processor capable of communicating with the client system via a communications channel, and

the request is transmitted to the remote processor via the communications channel.

7.   The method of claim 6 wherein the communications channel includes the Internet or World Wide Web.

8.   The method of claim 2 further including:

causing the obtained software to be installed on the client system without a user of the client system manually installing the software.

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9.   The method of claim 2 wherein the event is generated upon user interaction with the peripheral device.

10.   The method of claim 9 wherein the event can include actuating a device START button.

11.   The method of claim 1 wherein transmitting a request for the software or data includes opening, in response to detection of a device event, a communications channel with the first source, to enable access to any of libraries, packaging or configuration data on the first source to establish a repository of device drivers and supporting applications suitable for the peripheral device.

12.   The method of claim 11 wherein receiving the software or data from the first source includes receiving a package containing any of data, script files or software to augment a local database to enable handling of previously unsupported devices.

13.   The method of claim 1 further including:

responding to events originating on a home network operating in accordance with a home network standard.

14.   The method of claim 13 wherein the home network standard is the American National Standards Institute (ANSI) home network standard.

15.   The method of claim 2 wherein the step of responding to peripheral devices is defined by a package resident on the client system, or on the first source.

16.   The method of claim 15 wherein the package can be resident in the client system or obtained from the first source after detection of the device event.

17.   The method of claim 2 wherein the responding includes:

navigating to a default web page when no software can be obtained from the first source to support the device.

18.   The method of claim 2 further including:

utilizing a standard format to define device driver packages.